

## Message Text

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52

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 INRE-00 RSR-01 DPW-01 OMB-01

TRSE-00 NEAE-00 SR-02 ORM-03 AID-20 IO-12 /132 W

----- 124872

O R 200730 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3889

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USUN NEW YORK 1520

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 4647

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IN PK BG

SUBJECT : INDIA- BANGLADESH JOINT DECLARATION

REF: NEW DELHI 4511

SUMMARY: INDIA IS EMPHASIZING THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE  
INDO- BANGLADESH JOINT DECLARATION, ARGUING THAT THE BALL IS NOW  
IN BHUTTO'S COURT, AND STRESSING AT LEAST FOR MOMENT THAT NUMBER  
OF PEOPLE TO BE EXCHANGED AS PART OF THE " PACKAGE" IS NOT  
NEGOTIABLE. A SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS CONSIDERS IT  
SIGNIFICANT THAT RADIO PAKISTAN IS NOW EMPLOYING THE TERM  
" BANGLADESH". THE INDO- BANGLADESH PROPOSAL SHOULD EASE SHORT  
TERM PRESSURES ON INDIA, BUT IF IT IS NOT ACCEPTED INDIA WILL STILL  
BE LEFT WITH UNWANTED POWS. END SUMMARY

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1. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS AND OFFICIALLY INSPIRED REPORTS IN THE APR 18 PRESS ALL PAINT THE APRIL 18 INDO- BANGLADESH JOINT DECLARATION AS A REASONABLE PACKAGE. THEY EMPHASIZE IT IS NOW UP TO BHUTTO, AND INSIST THAT THERE WAS A COMPLETE MEETING OF INDIAN AND BANGLADESH MINDS IN REACHING AGREEMENT ON THE DECLARATION. THESE SOURCES EMPHASIZE SIGNIFICANT BANGLADESH MOVEMENT IN NOT INSISTING ON PAKISTAN RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH AS A PRECONDITION FOR THE " HUMANITARIAN" STEPS. THEY NOTE PREVIOUS BHUTTO INDICATIONS HE WOULD ACCEPT NON- REPATRIATION OF SOME POWS WANTED FOR TRIALS ( BHUTTO TO BLITZ EDITOR KARANJIA LAST FALL) AND A HEAD- TO- HEAD EXCHANGE OF BIHARIS IN BANGLADESH FOR BENGALLEES IN PAKISTAN ( BHUTTO TO HINDUSTAN TIMES EDITOR VERGHESE LAST JUNE).

2. INDIAN SOURCES IMPLY THAT THE PROPOSAL IS A " TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT" PACKAGE. FOREIGN MINISTRY JOINT SECRETARY K. P. S. MENON TOLD THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR THIS MEANT BANGLADESH WAS NOT INTERESTED IN BARGAINING OVER NUMBERS: ALL BENGALLEES WOULD HAVE TO BE EXCHANGED FOR ALL BIHARIS OPTING FOR PAKISTAN. HE OBSERVED THAT INDIA BELIEVED THERE WERE 280,000 BENGALLEES IN PAKISTAN AND THESE ABOUT COMPLETELY BALANCED THE BIHARIS WHO OPTED FOR PAKISTAN. MENON SAID HE RECOGNIZED THERE WERE A VARIETY OF WAYS IN WHICH PAKISTAN COULD ANSWER THE DECLARATION, AND INDIA ( AND BANGLADESH) WOULD HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE WHICH HE CHOSE. HE WAS NOT SURE, FOR EXAMPLE, HOW INDIA WOULD RESPOND IF BHUTTO SAID HE WANTED TO TALK PRIVATELY WITH THE INDIANS ABOUT THE DECLARATION.

3. MENON SAID HE DID THINK IT WAS " EXTREMELY SIGNIFICANT" THAT RADIO PAKISTAN HAD REFERRED TO BANGLADESH BY ITS OFFICIAL NAME ON APRIL 17 FOR THE FIRST TIME AND WONDERED WHETHER THIS MIGHT INDICATE SOME PAKISTANI MOVEMENT ON FORMAL ACCEPTANCE OF BANGLADESH. WHETHER PAKISTAN DID RECOGNIZE OR NOT, HOWEVER, IMPEMENTATION OF THE INDIAN- BANGLADESH DECLARATION WOULD PERMIT INDIA AND PAKISTAN TO MOVE AHEAD ON BILATERAL ISSUES WHICH DID NOT DIRECTLY AFFECT BANGLADESH.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE THE BOLD FRONT PUT UP BY THE INDIANS, IT SEEMS ALMOST CERTAIN TO US, GIVEN INDIAN COMMENTS A WEEK AGO ( DELHI 4128), THAT INDIA PRESSED BANGLADESH HARD FOR A SIMPLER AND MORE DIRECT BENGALLEE/ POW PACKAGE AND LOST. AT THAT IME, FOREIGN MINISTRY JOINT SECRETARY FOR PAKISTAN, ASHOK CHIB, SEEMED TO SEE THE BIHARI

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ISSUE AS " ANOTHER PROBLEM" WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE SOLVED BUT  
NOT IMMEDIATELY. THE INDIANS ARE SIMPLY NOT PREPARED TO GO TO THE  
WALL

WITH BANGLADESH AT THIS TIME, PARTICULARLY WHEN THE BENGALLEES HAVE  
" MORAL" ARGUMENTS ON THEIR SIDE IN PRESSING FOR THE REPATRIATION  
OF THE BIHARIS. NO ONE SEEMS VERY OPTIMISTIC BHUTTO WILL AGREE TO  
THE PRESENT PROPOSAL BUT THERE SEEMS TO BE A FEELING THAT, EVEN  
IF IT DOESN' T ENABLE INDIA TO MOVE AHEAD ON SUBSTANCE, IT DOES  
REPRESENT A MOVE DEFENSIBLE TO BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL  
AUDIENCES, PUTS BHUTTO ON THE DEFENSIVE AND AFTER ALL  
MIGHT, JUST MIGHT, ELICIT A FAVORABLE RESPONSE. IF PAKISTAN  
DOES NOT MAKE AN ACCEPTABLE RESPONSE THESE  
BENEFITS WILL BE SHORT TERM ONES. INDIA WILL STILL HAVE THE BURDEN  
OF THE POWS AND THE DILEMA OF HOW TO MOVE ITS RELATIONS OFF DEAD  
CENTER WITH PAKISTAN WITHOUT JEOPARDIZING ITS TIES WITH  
BANGLADESH. ALSO, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW FAR  
THE DECLARATION EASES DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL  
PRESSURES TO GET RID OF THE POWS. HONORS FOR THIS ROUND  
APPEAR TO HAVE GONE TO BANGLADESH. NEV  
E E E E E E E

\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL

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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**TAGS:** PFOR, BG, IN, PK, n/a  
**To:** BOMBAY  
COLOMBO  
Dacca  
ISLAMABAD  
KATHMANDU  
LONDON  
NEA

SECSTATE WASHDC  
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